

COMMENTS ON CAPTEL:

I am a late deafened consumer of telephone assistive devices. One of the most frustrating things for me to deal with when I became deaf—over 40 years ago—was my inability to use the regular telephone. When the TTY's first became available, I was overjoyed but for a long time my TTY calls were limited to other people who also had TTY's. We began a local and limited relay service in our city of Eau Claire which was another step but TTY calls were still limited. When States began offering Relay Services; again, I was thrilled even though I found that some "hearing people" were not 100% comfortable with using this system.

Then came the Cap Tel phone and it would take many pages for me to adequately express what a huge difference this has made in my life. It has been absolutely wonderful and as a trial user, I have reaped the rewards of this technology since I can call anyone, anywhere, and not have to depend on others to help make my calls. People with whom I use the Cap Tel phone are amazed and thrilled to know that the Cap Tel and its great Captionists are making it possible for me and others who are deaf or hard of hearing to use the telephone and to call whomever I need or wish to call. It is so much quicker and as an example, if I ever needed to call Emergency, I no longer would have to call the relay number but instead my Cap Tel call can be answered and I can begin talking immediately. Cap Tel is a lifeline to me. My family members and friends feel the same way.

The baby boomers are aging and many of them are also experiencing hearing losses so I am sure that there will be a constant demand for Cap Tel when they find that ordinary telephones are not helping them and they will demand better and more advanced technology which is what the Cap Tel phone is!

My thanks to all who have made Cap Tel possible and I hope that Cap Tel will be also recognized by the FCC as a remarkable and helpful aid to those of us who depend on this technology and that it continues to be a reimbursable TRS service.

Sincerely,

Helen Rizzi